



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Seattle Planning Commission

Barbara Wilson, Executive Director

February 14, 2006

Governor Christine Gregoire

Office of the Governor

P.O. Box 40002

Olympia, Washington 98504-0002

Dear Governor Gregoire,

The Seattle Planning Commission is an independent citizen advisory commission authorized by City Charter since 1946 to advise the City on broad planning goals, policies and plans that affect the physical development of the City. For the past several years, the Commission has participated in reviewing plans for replacement of the Alaskan Way Viaduct and redevelopment of the Central Waterfront, as presented by the Washington State Department of Transportation, City of Seattle Department of Transportation, and the City of Seattle Department of Planning and Development. The Commission has consistently endorsed the tunnel option as the preferred alternative based on urban design and planning considerations.

In light of recent information and financial analysis about the available funds for this project – particularly regarding the Core Project concept – along with our on-going concerns about the imminent risks to the public safety and welfare, we urge the State to proceed with the tunnel alternative for the replacement of the current viaduct structure.

1) A Viable Funding Plan: The Core Project Concept

The Seattle Department of Transportation recently briefed the Commission on the status of Viaduct replacement planning. We are pleased to see that the current plan, with its Core Project concept, brings the tunnel alternative within range of available funding and, at the same time, significantly reduces the construction time and its attendant impacts. The agencies involved are to be commended for their persistence in developing the plan and addressing concerns raised by the community.

We believe planning has come to a point where the preferred alternative can be funded and, therefore, we recommend that the State proceed with the preferred alternative.

2) Ongoing Risks to the Public Safety and Welfare

The Planning Commission continues to be concerned about the danger to public safety that would result from the collapse of the Viaduct in an earthquake. Plainly stated, the current Viaduct is a serious public safety hazard. We are also concerned about the economic damage to the City and State that may result from unplanned closure of the Viaduct due to earthquake damage, either from a collapse or some lesser event that results in its closure.

Such concerns point to an urgent need for a decision that will allow the Viaduct replacement project to move forward as expeditiously as possible.

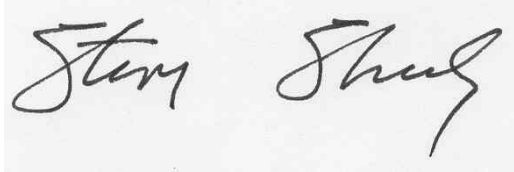
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Executive Director
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The Planning Commission reiterates its strong support for moving forward with the full tunnel alternative – including the plans included in the current Core Project concept – believing this option, more than any other, will have a positive effect on the regional transportation system, will strengthen the regional and local economy, will enhance the environmental quality of Elliott Bay, and will improve the character of Seattle's Central Waterfront and Center City community.

We thank you for your consideration and would be happy to respond to any questions or requests for additional information.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Sheehy", is shown on a light-colored background.

Steve Sheehy, Chair
Seattle Planning Commission

cc: US Senator Patty Murray
Lieutenant Governor Brad Owen, President of the Washington State Senate
Senator Mary Margaret Haugen, Chair – Transportation Committee, Washington State Senate
Senator Margarita Prentice, Chair – Ways and Means Committee, Washington State Senate
Senator Karen Fraser, Vice Chair – Ways and Means Committee – Capital Budget Chair, Washington State Senate
Senator Ken Jacobsen
Senator Adam Kline
Senator Jeanne Kohl-Welles
Senator Eric Poulson
Senator Pat Thibaudeau
Representative Frank Chopp, Speaker of the House, Washington State House of Representatives
Representative Ed Murray, Chair – Transportation Committee, Washington State House of Representatives
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Douglas McDonald, Secretary of Transportation - Washington State Department of Transportation
Grace Crunican, Director - Seattle Department of Transportation
Diane Sugimura, Director - Seattle Department of Planning and Development
Susan Crowley Saffery, Director – Seattle Office of Intergovernmental Relations
John Rahaim, Director of City Planning – Department of Planning and Development
Ron Paananen, Viaduct Project Manager - Washington State Department of Transportation
Steve Pearce, Project Manager – Seattle Department of Transportation
David Foster, Chief State Lobbyist - Seattle Office of Intergovernmental Relations
Shawn Bunney, Chair – Regional Transportation Investment District (RTID)
David Spiker, Chair -- Seattle Design Commission
Layne Cubell, Seattle Design Commission